



# EmployeeUPDATE

*Our Mission: To serve the people of North Carolina by enabling individuals, families and communities to be healthy and secure, and to achieve social and economic well-being.*

**A monthly publication for employees of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services**

## N.C. Food Stamp Program is a national star

North Carolina's Food Stamp program (now known as Food and Nutrition Services) was a shining star at the annual U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service Awards Dinner and Ceremony in Atlanta on June 5. North Carolina was the recipient of the top award and two other awards when USDA presented its "Starring in Public Service" awards.

The premier award, the 2007 Director Cup Award, recognizes excellence in the areas of payment accuracy, claims management and program access, which includes participation and application timeliness measurements. North Carolina performed with excellence in each of these program areas and was first in the region to collect food stamp claims from multiple debtors, making our state the leader in reducing its over-issuance debt.

For its commitment to accuracy and integrity, North Carolina also earned



At the awards ceremony were (left to right): Adonica Hampton, assistant chief of Economic Services; Robin Register, assistant chief of Performance Management and Reporting; Jane Schwartz, retired chief of Economic Services; Diane Gridley, Food and Nutrition Services and Energy representative; and Pat Moore, Quality Control administrator.

the QC Star Award. Presented annually to one state in each region, this award is determined by weighing measurable standards of excellence in the quality control arena. The criteria include transmission timeliness, case completion rates, correctness of case reviews, and the validity of data transmitted to the

**Continued on page 2**

## INSIDE TOP FEATURES

**A life saved, Page 3**

**Don't Wait! Direct Deposit for paychecks to be required, Page 6**

**Changes in Budget & Analysis, Child Development leadership, Page 7**

**Helping refugees  
begin a new life**

➡ **Page 4**



**Farewell  
BBQ for  
Secretary**

➡ **Page 8**



**N.C. Food Stamp Program cont. from page 1**

Food Stamp Quality Control System. Last year, the excellence of North Carolina's efforts was reflected by its receipt of \$6.6 million in bonuses for a payment error rate of just 2.97 percent, the fifth-best in the nation.

North Carolina was also recognized with the Regional Financial Management Award for having the most accurate initial budget projection. For fiscal year 2006, North Carolina's initial Food Stamp

Program budget was within 1 percent of the final expenditures. Not bad for a program with an administrative budget over \$62 million!

Sincere thanks and congratulations to all Division of Social Services' employees and county departments of social services for their hard work and for their outstanding contributions in making North Carolina's program one of the best in the nation. ■

## **Name change reflects mission of agency**

The N.C. Division of Facility Services has a new name. The agency is now the N.C. Division of Health Service Regulation.

"This gives us a name that more accurately reflects the mission of our agency," said Robert Fitzgerald, division director. "It also more clearly communicates with the public who they might need to contact if they have concerns about care in North Carolina."

Among the services regulated by the division are medical, mental health and group care facilities, home care and hospice agencies, emergency medical services, and local jails.

The name change was requested by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, approved by the General Assembly, and signed into law July 5. ■

**“**

**F O O D S T A M P S**

**”**

**Earlier this summer, the Governor signed Senate Bill 836, which changes the name of the food stamp program to the Food and Nutrition Services program. The change more accurately reflects how the current program functions. Recipients no longer use paper food stamps; they now use electronic benefit transfer cards that work in much the same way as a credit or debit card.**

**More information about the Food and Nutrition Services program is available on the web at [www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/foodstamp/index.htm](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/foodstamp/index.htm) or by calling your local department of social services.**

## A life saved

Friday, June 22, was a typical day at the Smithfield satellite office of the Division of Public Health Child Development Services Agency (CDSA). Co-workers were having lunch and talking about their weekend plans. But on this day, a routine lunch turned into a frightening struggle for life and ended happily, with a first-aid life-saving technique called the Heimlich maneuver. The life saved was that of CDSA service coordinator Chrissy Wood.

While Wood was eating lunch, a cracker lodged in her throat and cut off her air supply. She jumped up from her chair and started making desperate choking motions to her co-workers. Co-worker Lynn Johnson was first to respond to the emergency situation by attempting the Heimlich maneuver, but her attempt was unsuccessful because Wood was taller and in constant motion.

The situation became critical. Wood's face and lips started to turn blue. Her left eye became swollen and she was very close to losing consciousness. In an adjoining room, Meredith Holden heard the commotion. She responded immediately by running in to help. She promptly got into position behind Wood, located her belly-button, positioned her fist above the belly-button, placed her other hand on top, and pulled upward. Holden applied this Heimlich maneuver several times, finally dislodging the obstruction on her third attempt.



Chrissy Wood and Meredith Holden

Although extremely shaken by their experience, all were relieved that the incident ended on a happy note. In the words of Chrissy Wood, "If it was not for Meredith's quick reaction, I would not be here today. Meredith Holden saved my life."

Holden and Johnson both responded quickly to an emergency situation as trained first aid responders, and Wood's life was saved as a result.

"Meredith Holden and Lynn Johnson are to be commended for their actions," said Biagio Arsena, DPH safety officer. "All DHHS employees should take advantage of offered first aid and CPR certification programs – it can save a life at work, on the road, and at home." ■



# Helping refugees begin a new life

Each year, hundreds of thousands of refugees flee war, genocide, torture or political repression in their homelands. Last year alone, nearly 1,500 refugees found their way to North Carolina to begin building new lives in a new place. On June 20, refugees and their supporters across the state observed World Refugee Day, the internationally celebrated day established in 2000 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.



Sudanese boys dance in Charlotte.

North Carolina held numerous events and programs in June highlighting the courage and contributions of refugees. Hundreds gathered to learn about the plight of refugees and to experience their culture through art, music, dance and cuisine. Both TV and print media covered these stories of how unimaginable grief is transformed into new hope and new life.

A film festival, premiering “Rain in a Dry Land,” was featured in eight locations, generating new interest in refugees. In uptown Charlotte, children sang to welcome their refugee neighbors as everyone celebrated hopefulness for all who come to find “A New Home, A New Life.” In Greensboro, refugees performed traditional dances and music, did martial arts demonstrations, and read poetry to a community gathering at an historical museum. In coastal New Bern, the resettlement agency and

refugee supporters partnered with the local farmer’s market for a community-wide event showcasing the arts, crafts, music and foods of the diverse refugee community.

In the capital city of Raleigh, resettlement agencies and state government employees screened the film and held a “Welcome Kit” campaign to collect items for 35 newly arriving refugee families in the area. State employees collected bed, bath and kitchen linens; housewares; cleaning supplies; personal hygiene items; school supplies; and first aid essentials. These donations provide a great start to the families’ resettlement – a welcoming home is the first step to making a positive adjustment to a new community.

The week-long celebration concluded with a film screening at the N.C. Museum of Art.

Over the past few years, North Carolina has emerged as a major destination for refugees. During the 1990s, the state typically welcomed 1 to 2 percent of all refugees who resettled in the United States each year. Since 2002, North Carolina has averaged 3 to 5 percent each year and has been reclassified by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement as a “large” resettlement state.

The N.C. State Refugee Office, an agency of DHHS, works to smooth

the transition for these new arrivals. Working with other public agencies and non-profit organizations, many of them faith-based, the State Refugee Office ensures that refugees and their families have the basics to start a new life, said Marlene Myers, state refugee coordinator. Help can include short-term financial and food assistance, housing, medical care, employment placement and training in many new skills, from English to driving.

At any given time, state refugee service providers are helping more than 8,500 refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency and social adjustment.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates the global refugee population at 12 million. North Carolina’s refugee population

Continued on page 6



## Jalil Isa *iSalud y Saludos!*

### ***The cost of a life.***

I recently spent the weekend in Orlando, Florida where my brother – a junior at my alma mater, the University of Florida – is currently completing an internship at NASA (he has a bit of a commute each morning). I told him I'd pay him a visit before he finished up the summer stint.

As is usually the case on those rare occasions when I visit my home state of Florida during the summer, I immediately said my thanks for having left Florida when I did. And I'm reminded why I should stay away during the summer (or most any other time, for that matter). The temperature was HOT! The humidity in Central Florida is also unbearable. Luckily, while I was there, I went skydiving. This exposed me to some chilly temperatures—at least for a few seconds!

Granted, North Carolina is not that much better when it comes to hot summer temperatures. But here, I only have to worry about the miserable conditions for a few months rather than year-round. The hot temperatures I felt in Florida, while waiting on the ground for the plane to take us up to 15 thousand feet for our jump, reminded me of the heat that many people – farmers in particular – must be experiencing all over the country.

In North Carolina, six heat-related deaths were recorded among farm workers during 2005 and 2006. DHHS has been publishing materials and spreading the word each year about the dangers of heat and heat exposure, but the information sometimes generates a lukewarm response. In some cases, this can be attributed to farm workers who aren't familiar with the local climate and work conditions. Bosses and workers may discount the dangers the soaring temperatures may pose. Other times, the determination of workers to work as hard as possible to make a good impression and earn their pay may accidentally lead them to literally work themselves to death.

It's difficult to change the culture of the workplace and the habits of farm workers, construction workers and other laborers. It's up to the workers to become more knowledgeable about the inherent dangers of their work and learn ways to decrease their risk. It's up to the farmers and other bosses to create a work climate and work culture where the workers can feel comfortable about taking water breaks and resting when it's necessary. These basic measures can quite possibly save someone's life!

The thing about heat-related deaths is that they're generally completely preventable. There's no reason why

someone should die this way. It's a matter of taking precautions in the first place – drinking plenty of water or juice, getting out of the sun periodically, taking rest breaks – and recognizing the warning signs of heat-related illness. In the case of heat exhaustion, the warning signs are heavy sweating, muscle cramps, dizziness, nausea. Heat stroke may set in if the situation isn't quickly remedied by getting the person to a cooler environment and giving them plenty of non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated fluids to drink. Heat stroke is characterized by extremely hot body temperature in excess of 103°F; hot, dry skin; and unconsciousness. This is a life-threatening condition requiring the victim to immediately be cooled down by whatever means necessary, including sponging them down or bathing them in cool water. At this point, the victim should actually not be given anything to drink, but medical help should be summoned immediately.

Workers must learn about the dangers of working in hot conditions and have access to water and work breaks during the course of their chores. The fruits and vegetables we eat, the houses we live in, and the roads we use shouldn't come at such a high cost—the cost of a life! ■

*Jalil*

**Helping refugees cont. from page 4**

comes from across the globe — Africa (primarily Liberia and Somalia), Asia (Myanmar, formerly known as Burma), Europe (Russia and other former Soviet bloc nations) and the Americas (Cuba). Two of the largest refugee communities in North Carolina consist of our former allies in the Vietnam War — 18,000 Hmong from Laos and more than 8,000 Montagnards — the largest concentration of Montagnard people outside the highlands of Vietnam.

Despite the challenges of a strange new land with new customs, most refugees succeed, Myers said. The job retention rate for refugees in North Carolina is 95 percent after 90 days, one of the

highest rates in the nation. More than 1,100 refugees in North Carolina took English language classes last year, and almost 900 were working toward citizenship.

“Refugees are your neighbors, coworkers and new friends,” Myers says. “You can help them open the door to a new home and a new life.” For more information about the program, how to become a volunteer, or what you can do to help refugees build their new lives in North Carolina, call the State Refugee Office at (919) 733-4650, or log onto [www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/refugee/index.htm](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/refugee/index.htm) to



Burmese children sing in New Bern.

contact resettlement agencies in the Triangle. ■

## **Don't Wait!**

# **Direct deposit to be required for employee paychecks**

Direct deposit is when a person's pay is transferred directly into a bank or credit union account, instead of the employee receiving a paper paycheck. Starting October 1, 2007 nearly all DHHS employees must be paid through direct deposit.

DHHS employees not currently using direct deposit services should have already received a letter letting them know that the Office of the State Controller will enforce the mandatory direct deposit policy already in effect for state employees paid through Central Payroll. All current employees who do not already use direct deposit will be required to enroll in direct deposit by August 28, 2007 at the

financial institution of their choosing, or to request a waiver from the State Controller by that same date.

Employees who are unable to open an account at a bank or other financial institution, and employees who believe enrollment in direct deposit will result in extreme hardship, may request an exemption. Exemption forms are available through DHHS human resources offices. The forms may also be downloaded from the State Controller's Website — <http://www.ncosc.net>.

Once a request has been submitted, it will be reviewed by the Office of the State Controller, and the employee will receive a letter from the Controller's

office within 15 work days indicating whether or not the employee has been exempted from direct deposit. For employees who are granted an exemption, it is important to note that beginning October 1, 2007, all paper checks will be mailed directly to employees from OSC on payday, instead of being delivered to the agency for distribution. The change is part of the preparation for state government's new BEACON payroll system. ■





# Budget & Analysis, Child Development leadership change

DHHS Secretary Carmen Hooker Odom has announced several changes in division leadership.

Rob Kindsvatter, Director of the Division of Child Development, has succeeded Aleta Mills as Deputy Director of the Division of Budget and Analysis.

“This is a crucial position, and we need someone who really ‘gets’ the ins and outs of budgeting, especially as that relates to effectively supporting programs,” said Hooker Odom. “Rob brings exactly what is needed to the division. He knows what it is like to be in a division and to work on budget from that perspective, and his experience at the division level is going to serve us well.”

Under Kindsvatter’s leadership, DCD was able to continue to make significant progress in promoting access to quality child care and early education for North Carolina’s children and families. The division reduced the number of children waiting for subsidized child care from 38,000 to just over 15,000; implemented adjustments to reimbursement rates paid to child care providers to bring them closer to rates paid in the private sector; and continued to hone the star-rated licensing system. Kindsvatter’s ability to effectively articulate program needs with Governor’s Office staff and members of the General Assembly was especially critical in this area. This new position brings Kindsvatter, who has a degree from NCSU in Business Administration and Economics, back to program and fiscal analysis and budgeting, but now he is going to be

a support to the entire department, Hooker Odom pointed out.

Cyndie Bennett has assumed the director’s position at DCD. Bennett brings almost 27 years of experience with children’s programs to this new role. She spent much of her early time with the mental health schools, working at Whitaker School, Wright School and John Umstead Hospital. She joined the Office of Educational Services (OES) as Exceptional Children’s Director in February 2000 and became director in October 2001.

Hooker Odom said, “Cyndie has done some remarkable things while at OES – increasing the capacity to provide quality services to children ages birth through three years who are deaf/hard of hearing or blind; implementing an outcome study for early intervention deaf/hard of hearing programs; creating the resource support program to increase capacity to serve children in their home communities; and helping to increase internal job growth in the division through Aspiring Supervisor’s training.

“Cyndie has shown herself to be continually on the lookout for innovation,” Hooker Odom said. “This year, for example, OES began offering online coursework for middle and high school students at all DHHS schools to assist with credit recovery and remediation.”

Dwight Pearson, who is OES director of special projects, has been designated interim OES director. Dwight brings to this position close to three decades of

experience with education at both the local and state level.

“Dwight has done it all – serving as a teacher, principal and assistant superintendent at the local level and working in a number of roles at the state level at both Department of Public Instruction and OES,” said Hooker Odom. “We are fortunate to have someone with Dwight’s breadth of knowledge available to assume leadership of OES.”

Pearson has both the practical experience and the educational background for this job. During his tenure with OES, he served as interim director of the Eastern School for the Deaf, giving him direct experience leading one of our DHHS schools. He holds several degrees in the educational arena, including a PhD in educational research and policy analysis. He has also served as an adjunct professor at North Carolina Central University.

“I’ve been very concerned about building the benches in our various divisions – planning for succession by promoting from within and helping divisions to grow new leaders,” said Hooker Odom. “All of these changes are part of that process. Rob, Cyndie and Dwight are excited about these changes and looking forward to new challenges. As I leave DHHS, I look forward to hearing great things from North Carolina where these three are concerned.”

The transitions took effect in July. ■

*“I Like Calling  
North Carolina Home”*

A FAREWELL EVENT IN HONOR OF  
SECRETARY CARMEN HOOKER ODOM

PLEASE JOIN US FOR DINNER TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2007  
5:15 P.M. ON THE FRONT LAWN OF THE ADAMS BUILDING,  
DOROTHEA DIX CAMPUS.

WILBER'S BARBECUE WILL BE SERVING DINNER.  
TICKETS ARE \$10.00 PER PERSON  
WHICH COVERS THE FOOD AND COST OF THE EVENT.

TICKETS MUST BE PURCHASED IN ADVANCE.  
THE DEADLINE TO PURCHASE TICKETS IS  
FRIDAY, AUGUST 3, 2007.

PLEASE SEE ORDER FORM BELOW.

TICKET ORDER FORM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF TICKETS @ \$10.00 PER PERSON \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \_\_\_\_\_

CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT OF YOUR ORDER WILL BE SENT VIA EMAIL.

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO JEAN PARRISH AND MAIL TO:

MSC 2001, RALEIGH, NC 27699-2001

OR DELIVER TO:

ADAMS BUILDING, 101 BLAIR DRIVE, RALEIGH, NC 27603

TICKETS ARE TO BE PICKED UP AT CHECK-IN ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT AND ARE NON-REFUNDABLE.



# DHHS WELLNESS INITIATIVE

**Complete your Health Risk Assessment  
by Sept. 30, and you could be one of 10 State  
Health Plan members to win \$300!**

**Suzanna Young,**  
*DHHS Wellness Initiative Director*

Taking a health risk assessment (HRA) can help make us more aware of our individual health risks and guide us in developing a personal health plan. And taking the HRA once a year helps measure our progress on reducing health risks for chronic diseases through lifestyle changes. If you took the HRA last year, it's time to take it again to see if your health risk has changed. If you have not taken it yet, please take your personal health risk assessment today at [www.shpnc.org](http://www.shpnc.org). On that site, click on N.C. HealthSmart and log into your Personal Health Portal. If you are a new user, you will need your State Health ID number to register.

Complete the Health Risk Assessment between June 1 and Sept. 30, 2007 and you will be entered into a drawing to win one of ten \$300 Visa® gift cards.

The health risk assessment takes only about 15 minutes and is completely confidential – neither the Health Plan nor any state agency has access to an individual's HRA information. You will receive instant feedback on your individual health risks, and you can choose from a variety of health resources on the website for your needs. Employees who are not members of the N.C. State Health Plan are not eligible for the State Health Plan's drawing, but can still access a free personal health risk assessment at [www.fittogethernc.org/HRA.aspx](http://www.fittogethernc.org/HRA.aspx).

Another N.C. State Health Plan benefit is available for PPO members: Blue ExtrasSM Benefits include valuable discounts on health services, vitamins, laser eye surgery, cosmetic dentistry and surgery, and hearing aids. PPO members can also earn points for physical activity. Go to [www.bcbsnc.com/members/health-wellness/blue-extras/](http://www.bcbsnc.com/members/health-wellness/blue-extras/). ■

Visit the new DHHS Employee Wellness website at

**[www.ncdhhs.gov/wellness.htm](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/wellness.htm)**

for information on DHHS wellness facilities, activities and activity schedules, and employee wellness activity participation forms.

# INTRODUCING THE BUSINESS OF

This is the fifth in a series of articles that introduce the DHHS Business Plan and explain the different Business Drivers identified in the Plan.

## Business Driver #4

**NC DHHS will leverage resources to achieve operational efficiencies by:**

- Streamlining business processes;
- Implementing process improvement prior to automation;
- Enhancing access and transparency of information;
- Identifying opportunities for cost avoidance, savings and recovery; and
- Ensuring the continuity, reliability and security of data and support systems.

It's tough to be a government entity. Budgetary resources are limited and generally are controlled by the legislature, not the people running the businesses. Agencies must comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. Issue advocates and public interest groups must be dealt with, along with the ever-watchful eye of the media.

The best way for us to deal with all these factors is to be good at what we do. That means being good at each step of a process, from conception to design, to delivery and follow up. Outcomes matter...but we have finite amounts of time, money and human resources available to achieve those outcomes. Therefore, efficiency matters if we want to consistently achieve excellence in all that we do.

Operational efficiency is not it merely working harder, faster, longer, and trying to make fewer mistakes. Business Driver #4 identifies five working ways to achieve operational efficiency:

### **1. Streamlining business processes**

A process that has been in place for more than a couple of years is probably outdated and inefficient. Good processes have to adapt to changing technology, new environmental factors, resource availability and customer expectations. It seems to be human nature to add or layer more activity without changing the underlying process, but over time, that builds in redundancies and inefficiencies that slow us down and add costs.

### **2. Implementing process improvements prior to automation**

Many times, we believe that automation in and of itself is a process improvement. But why would we want to spend money, time and resources to automate a bad process? Additionally, if a process is not designed for automation, it probably will be too complex

Continued on page 11

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**Introducing the Business of DHHS cont. from page 10**

and convoluted for really efficient technology translation. Most technology experts will automate the process that is given to them, so we should ensure that we give them the most efficient process possible. We should not expect them to be programmatic experts, nor should we expect them to redesign processes without the direct input of the people who supervise and perform the work day to day.

**3. Enhancing access and transparency of information**

For a variety of reasons—some historical, some reflecting funding sources, some technical — information tends to be held in silos; that is, information in one area is often unavailable — even off limits — to employees working in other areas and sometimes even in the same division. There are instances where this approach is appropriate, especially where federal or state statutes require restricted access. On the other hand, there are many more instances where restricting the flow of information impairs program or service delivery, encourages duplication of data gathering and storage, and otherwise increases the cost of operations while lowering productivity. All of us in DHHS should strive to establish a cultural and technical environment where information is more freely shared across division lines and where ownership is vested with the department and/or the state, rather than with individual divisions or programs.

**4. Identifying opportunities for cost avoidance, savings and recovery**

This doesn't just happen...the organization must make it happen by devoting time and resources to this effort. Having the right people with the relevant experience is critical. A cross-functional team of employees with programmatic and process expertise will be able to identify improvement opportunities and move forward with actual changes if they are empowered to do so by management.

**5. Ensuring the continuity, reliability and security of data and support systems**

Technology crosses all industries, all business units, and all business functions. In recent years there have been significant changes to how our information management systems are organized and managed. DHHS must continue to focus on this area to ensure that appropriate and reliable technology is available and properly used.

In summary, Operational Efficiency is what occurs when the right combination of people, processes and technology come together to enhance the productivity and value of any business operation while driving the cost of routine operations down to a desired level. The end result is that resources previously needed to manage operational tasks can be redirected to new, high-value initiatives that bring additional capabilities to the organization. ■

See the complete DHHS Business plan at [www.ncdhhs.gov/opp/businessplan/index.htm](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/opp/businessplan/index.htm).

**Next Month: DHHS Communications**



# Adoption Profile

## Introducing Cameron, Sydney and Jace

### A Closer Look at Cameron

Cameron is talkative, active, and definitely “all boy.” Basketball and Spiderman are Cameron’s two favorite things in life, but he enjoys sports and rough-and-tumble play a lot, too. He recently went on a day-long fishing trip and was thrilled that he caught four fish. Indoors, Cameron likes to color and make arts and crafts projects. According to his foster mom, he is “tons of fun” and a precious, happy little boy. He enjoys singing and clapping to Gospel music when riding in the car with his foster mom. She says he changes his mind every week about what he wants to be when he grows up; currently it is to be a contestant on “Dancing with the Stars,” and “he has his moves down.” Changing Cameron’s medication has made a marked improvement in his behavior at school and his ability to stay on task. He does much better at home and at camp when he is interested in an activity and able to work off some energy in a positive way.

### A Closer Look at Sydney

Her foster mother says this loving and affectionate tot is “off the chain”; Sydney has a mind of her own and lets you know it. She loves playing with her dolls and watching her favorite TV show. Sydney especially likes playing with her brothers and gets very upset if she can’t join in the big-boy games like basketball. She eats everything, whether it’s hot, salty, sweet or sour, and loves to tell her foster mom that it



Cameron, b. May 8, 2000  
Sydney, b. February 21, 2004  
Jace, b. August 29, 2001

is “soooooooooo good.” Sydney attends preschool and is potty trained. She is developmentally on target and making solid progress with her speech therapy. Sydney is fiercely independent and does not like to be told what to do, so it is very important that when you say something, you say it with authority. This beautiful little girl has celebrated all three of her birthdays in foster care, so she cannot comprehend what it means to be part of a family that she knows she can depend on.

### A Closer Look at Jace

Jace loves Spiderman and Batman and any superhero, including Sponge Bob. He says he wants to be a policeman because he likes the uniform. According to his foster mom, Jace is “laid back, quiet; settled may be the right word.” He is soft-spoken and very lovable. Both he and Cameron have very good manners. Jace gets along well both with other children and his siblings. He loves

to run and play just about anything outdoors, as long as he can be active. Basketball is Jace’s favorite sport. He also has an active imagination, enjoys creative play, and likes going out for ice cream or to play in the park. Jace has made tremendous improvements in his actions and behaviors, but he continues to keep many of his feelings and thoughts to himself. He attends regular classes at school where staying on task is a challenge, but he is doing much better in a structured classroom than he was in daycare. Because he still tends to tune out at times, it is helpful for Jace to have instructions repeated so he doesn’t miss anything important.

## A Family for Cameron, Sydney and Jace

An adoptive family for Cameron, Sydney and Jace needs to provide a fairly regular routine for day-to-day activities such as going to bed, having meals and snacks at a regular time, and having a schedule for homework time. They must also have clear expectations for behaviors so the children will know what to expect and will feel more secure knowing the adults in their lives are predictable and care for them. It will be important for the family to focus on their individual talents and gifts and to help teachers and others do the same. Success should be reinforced and encouraged with many opportunities for Cameron, Sydney and Jace to learn new skills and boost their self-esteem.

For more information on these children or adoption and foster care in general, call N.C. Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network toll-free at 1-877-NCKIDS-1 (1-877-625-4371). ■